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ABSTRACT

This study investigated commercial recreation educator and commercial recreation practitioner preferences for standards to be included in the development of national accreditation standards for commercial recreation curricula. Subjects were 24 commercial recreation educators and 48 commercial recreation practitioners, all randomly selected from membership information of professional organizations. The 40 standards agreed on through a three-round Delphi technique are listed. (JD)

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DEVELOPMENT OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL RECREATION CURRICULA

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

In 1974 the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Association for Leisure and Recreation established the Council on Accreditation for the purpose of evaluating academic preparation programs in park and recreation. The accreditation process includes the measuring of curriculum content against formal guidelines or standards. Accreditation was developed as a systemic evaluation procedure designed to specify that certain colleges and universities had been approved for the education of students in specific curriculm areas.

Between 1977 and 1986 15 colleges and universities had received recognition for their commercial/tourism recreation curriculums. During this time period however, there were no NRPA/AALR accreditation standards for the curriculum to be measured.

This study investigated commercial recreation educator and commercial recreation practitioner preferences for standards to be included in the development of national accreditation standards for commercial recreation curricula.

METHOD

Through the use of the three round Delphi technique a panel of 24 commercial recreation educators and a panel of 48 commercial recreation practitioners ranked 82 commercial recreation standards in 8 curriculum clusters. The educator panel was randomly selected from a population drawn from the 1986-87 Society of Park and Recreation Educators curriculum catalog and the 1987-88 Resort and Commercial Recreation Association membership directory. The practitioner panel was randomly selected from a population developed from professional associations membership referrals. Both panels were drawn from the five National Recreation and Park Association regions: Northeast, Southeast, Great Lakes, West, and the Pacific. The practitioner panel represented the five domains of commercial recreation: entertainment, hospitality, retail, environment, and tourism.

At the conclusion of each round the standards were ranked by the use of a median test, with a median of 1 being ranked first, a median of 2 being ranked second and so on until each standard had been ranked. A Kendall $\underline{W}$ test of concordance was applied at the conclusion of the third round to test for agreement of ranking between the two expert panels. The rankings of the two panels were then merged into one list of standards and a X^2 item analysis test was then conducted on the standards to determine at what point a significant change in agreement appeared. The 40 recommended standards demonstrated agreement between the two panels.

RESULTS

The first round of the Delphi technique was completed by 83% of the educators and 94.1% of the practitioners. The second round was completed by 91.7% of the educators and 89.6% of the practitioners. The third round had a 100% response rate from the educators and a 89.6% participation rate from the practitioners.

The following 40 standards are recommended as the national accreditation standards for commercial recreation curricula.

General Knowledge

1. Understanding of the basic skills and competencies (business, interpersonal and leadership) necessary for employment in the commercial and tourism recreation field on the professional level.
2. Acquire knowledge, insights, and attitudes for the successful establishment and management of commercial enterprises.
3. Knowledge of the varieties of existing commercial recreation operations, general requirements for useful ventures in the field, and unique problems associated with such ventures.
4. Understanding of the role that commercial recreation business plays in the total delivery of leisure services.

Trends-Issues, Assessment

1. Understanding the role of commercial/tourism recreation in meeting the leisure service wants among participants and potential participants.
2. Knowledge of the reasons why people participate in recreation and the psychological motivation for recreational activities.
3. Knowledge of trends in commercial recreation programming, entrepreneurship, sales, and management.
4. Knowledge of current trends and issues in the commercial/tourism recreation and facility management field.
5. Knowledge of and ability to apply techniques relevant to the analysis of business decisions in a recreation enterprise.

Programming and Leadership

1. Knowledge of and ability to conceptualize, develop, and implement recreation programs.
2. Knowledge of and ability to apply methods of assessing recreation activity and leisure needs in a commercial setting.
3. Understanding of and ability to apply principles of program planning and leadership in a commercial setting.
4. Understanding of and the ability to apply techniques of program evaluation and policy analysis that determine the extent to which programmatic and organizational goals and objectives have been achieved.
5. Knowledge of and ability to apply techniques of program evaluation.
6. Understanding of and ability to apply techniques of recreation planning that relate to demand for recreation delivery services.
7. Understanding of federal, state, county, municipal laws as they may impact program and services in the commercial/tourism sector.

Personnel and Labor

1. Knowledge of personnel management and supervision.
2. Knowledge of recruiting, training, and retaining employees.
3. Ability to conduct effective personnel hiring procedures.
4. Knowledge and ability to apply theoretical concepts of personnel management and motivation.
5. Knowledge of current labor laws.

Facility and Resource Management

1. Understanding of and ability to apply methods for assessing the demand for recreation and park services and facilities in the commercial sector.
2. Understanding of and ability to apply methods of recreation and park facility operation and maintenance.
3. Understanding of the principles and ability to apply techniques of planning recreation and park facilities.
4. Knowledge of equipment and facility utilization, repair and maintenance.
5. Understanding contract services for maintenance of facilities.

Marketing and Promotion

1. Knowledge of key marketing concepts and their applications to commercial/tourism recreation enterprises.
2. Understanding of marketing, promotion, and sales concepts.
3. Understanding of the concepts of supply and demand, trade and growth, and income and profit in relationship to marketing and promotion of commercial recreation supplies and/or services.

Legal and Financial

1. Understanding of and ability to apply techniques of financial management including development of budgets for operating and capital improvement, expenses and revenue, pricing of services, cost effectiveness analysis, and financial forecasting.
2. Knowledge of business organization methods and requirements, legal and insurance requirements, risk management, financial considerations and managing and evaluating operations.
3. Understanding of basic concepts of accounting, marketing, and evaluation of commercial/tourism recreation services.
4. Understanding of the various financing and budgeting principles and procedures used in commercial recreation.
5. Understanding of the legal liabilities of the management and operations of commercial/tourism recreation enterprises.

Business Methods

1. Knowledge of and ability to apply basic business concepts such as accounting, management, and writing skills.
2. Understanding of and ability to use business management skills in marketing, program development and personnel management including motivating, training, and evaluation of staff to achieve organizational goals.
3. Knowledge of the day to day operations in owning/managing a commercial/tourism recreation business.
4. Ability to synthesize business skills with sound professional recreation philosophy and practice.
5. Knowledge and understanding of business skills and problem solving terminology necessary for a career in commercial leisure systems and how to integrate this knowledge into a potential leisure service enterprise.
6. Knowledge of and ability to apply techniques relevant to the analysis of business decisions in recreation enterprises.

KEYWORDS

Accreditation, commercial recreation, standards